

Know the facts

About Jim Rex's Public School Choice Plan

Q: *What does Jim Rex's public school choice bill do?*

A: The bill creates public school choice committees in each of the state's local school districts; requires that these committees create at least one new in-district choice option at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; and requires these committees to adopt a proposal for at least one across-district choice option to be presented to its local school board. Final implementation would be at the discretion of the local school board.

Q: *How does the 2008 bill differ from the 2007 bill that was passed by the General Assembly but vetoed by Governor Mark Sanford?*

A: Unlike the 2007 legislation, this bill DOES NOT mandate across-district transfers. Instead, implementation of such programs would be voluntary on the part of local school boards and districts.

Q: *Is this an unfunded mandate for local school districts?*

A: Absolutely not. There is no mandate to implement specific programs or services that require additional funding.

Q: *Does this bill mandate across-district-line transfers for students?*

A: No. Implementation of such programs would be voluntary on the part of local school boards and districts.

Q: *Does this legislation force districts to abandon current attendance zones?*

A: No.

Q: *Is this likely to result in further segregation of South Carolina's public schools?*

A: No. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that effective public school choice programs lessen segregation and effectively address the achievement gap between white and minority students.

Q: *Will public school choice actually improve student achievement?*

A: There is growing evidence that there is a correlation between effective public school choice programs and student achievement. For example, at Beech Hill Elementary School in Dorchester School District Two, when compared to girls in co-ed classes, girls in single-gender programs had a lower percentage scoring "below basic" on PACT. Among seventh-grade males in single gender classes at Kingstree Junior High School in the Williamsburg County School District, there is a growing decrease in the percentage of those males scoring below basic, compared to peers not enrolled in single-gender programs.